

Ten Quick Tips on Writing a Professional Email

- 1 Always fill in the subject line with a topic that means something to your reader. Not "Decals" or "Important!" but "Deadline for New Parking Decals."
- 2 Put your main point in the opening sentence. Most readers won't stick around for a surprise ending.
- 3 Never begin a message with a vague "This"--as in "This needs to be done by 5:00." Always specify what you're writing about.
- 4 Don't use ALL [CAPITALS](#) (no shouting!), or all [lower-case](#) letters either (unless you're the poet e. e. cummings).
- 5 As a general rule, PLZ avoid [textspeak](#) ([abbreviations](#) and [acronyms](#)): *you* may be ROFLOL (rolling on the floor laughing out loud), but your reader may be left wondering WUWT (what's up with that).
- 6 Be brief *and* polite. If your message runs longer than two or three short paragraphs, consider (a) reducing the message, or (b) providing an attachment. But in any case, don't snap, growl, or bark.
- 7 Remember to say "please" and "thank you." And mean it. "Thank you for understanding why afternoon breaks have been eliminated" is prissy and petty. It's *not* polite.
- 8 Add a signature block with appropriate contact information (in most cases, your name, business address, and phone number, along with a legal disclaimer if required by your company). Do you *need* to clutter the signature block with a clever quotation and artwork? Probably not.
- 9 [Edit](#) and [proofread](#) before hitting "send." You may think you're too busy to sweat the small stuff, but unfortunately your reader may think you're a careless dolt.
- 10 Finally, reply promptly to serious messages. If you need more than 24 hours to collect information or make a decision, send a brief response explaining the delay.